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Subcommittee Examines Ways to Open Federal Marketplace to Small Businesses

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"We are focused on getting our economy back on track. One of our tasks towards meeting that goal is ensuring small businesses can bring their world-class products and services to the federal marketplace," said Chairman Braley.

Last year, the House passed the Chairman Braley's *H.R. 1873, The Small Business Fairness in Contracting Act*. The bill discourages reverse auctions and contract bundling, which rob small businesses of the opportunity to compete for federal projects. It also raises federal small business procurement goals and ensures contracts are designed to leverage the efficiency that is a hallmark of small firms.

"This administration pays billions of dollars to large contractors, but it has never met its small business contracting goals. That means taxpayers are being denied the unparalleled efficiency and innovation that small businesses bring to the table," said Chairman Braley. "Not giving entrepreneurs a real opportunity to compete with their larger counterparts is not just unfair; it's short-sighted."

Witnesses at the hearing also discussed the long-delayed Women's Procurement Program. The initiative was enacted seven years ago, but has yet to be implemented by the Small Business Administration (SBA). Only after a lawsuit filed by the Women's Chamber of

Commerceâ€”did SBA issue a regulation for the program. As the Chairman pointed out, however, its proposed guidelines are unworkable, and merely the latest in a series of contracting decisions that run counter to the intent of law.

"It's obvious this administration is not doing the job when it comes to small businesses and contracting. It is time to level the playing field and bring greater transparency to the process," said Chairman Braley. "Small businesses are ready to maximize every single tax-payer dollar, and that is exactly what our economy needs."